



Indian Painting and
Folk Art

(Cover)
HEAD OF A GIRL (1945)
Jamini Roy
Bengal School

Slide Room Duplicate

INDIAN PAINTING AND
FOLK ART

XVII CENTURY -- XX CENTURY

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
17 December 1953 - 17 January 1954

1-6-54

A.25 Sunday



I. KALIGHAT BRUSH DRAWING
Calcutta School, ca. 1875



II. ILLUSTRATION FROM THE RASIKA PRIYA
Malwa School, ca. 1620

I N D I A N P A I N T I N G A N D
F O L K A R T

X V I I C E N T U R Y -- X X C E N T U R Y

The study of Indian painting is vast and new. Much has been said and much remains to be discovered. This is especially true in classifying the various schools of India. Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy pioneered in this work and established schools which are generally accepted to this day. Recent work and discoveries have of course widened the field and have helped greatly in classifying Indian painting. However, Dr. Hermann Goetz points out that the knowledge of Indian painting is still very meager and until more evidence is available the classification can be but vague.(1)

This anonymous loan exhibition of "Indian Painting and Folk Art" has been organized using the schools listed by Ananda Coomaraswamy, Stella Kramrisch, and Basil Gray. The many schools represented here are grouped under the following three headings: Western Indian and Rajasthani Schools, Punjab Hill Schools, and Bengal Schools.

The majority of paintings shown here are from the Punjab Hill Schools of northern India. Beginning in the XVII Century, several schools of miniature painting came into existence. Small city states⁽²⁾ comprised this area, each with a court and royal family. In many of these states, studios and painters were kept busy by the court painting miniatures for illustrating the epics, the legends, the religious books, and the love poems of the Hindus. The Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Gita Govinda are but three of the favorite themes of the Indian painters.

Too great would be the task of analyzing the many styles of the various schools represented in this exhibition. Therefore I propose to sketch briefly the basic styles of but a few of the major schools.

The styles of the Punjab Hill Schools vary. Kangra paintings are considered by many the finest of the Punjab Hill miniatures. Color is clear and fresh; this is the final Guler style, delicate and charming, which was taken to Kangra in about 1780.⁽³⁾ For contrast in style we turn our attention to the Basohli school. Here the style is more primitive and the color hot and strong. Dark greenish black or intense yellow, opaque red-orange, cobalt blue, and white tend to be characteristic colors of this school.

In Rajasthani painting of the XVII Century we see a primitive and highly decorative style. The trees, birds, animals, and even figures, are flat with little or sometimes no attention paid to modeling. The color is bright and decorative as is the line and drawing. This is a style which might be compared to the folk art of India.

As mentioned above religious books and love poems were favorite themes of Indian, and especially Rajput, painters. The Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Rasika Priya, Bhagavad-Gita, and the Gita-Govinda are here presented in a very brief synopsis.

The Ramayana

The earliest known Ramayana or "The Adventures of Rama," was composed about V Century B.C. by the sage Valmiki. It deals with the life and adventures of Rama and his wife, Sita. The main section of this epic tells of the abduction of Sita by Ravana (twenty-armed and ten-headed demon king of Lanka) and the ensuing battles between Rama, aided by Hanuman (king of the monkeys), and Ravana, aided by the demons of Lanka. The destruction caused by Ravana on the mainland of India was so great that the god Vishnu decided to be born on earth and with the aid of the other gods, who were to be born on earth as monkeys, apes, and bears, he promised to destroy Ravana and his Rakshasas (demons) forever. (4)

The Mahabharata

'The great war of the Bharatas' (Mahabharata) is an epic poem, probably the longest in the world. Two hundred and twenty thousand lines in eighteen books make up this poem of the Hindus. Neither author nor time of first writing is known; in fact it is believed that this great literary work is of divine source. Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa is, however, believed by many to be the author. In this work as in the Ramayana the main theme is a great war. The struggle is between the Kauravas and Pandavas for the country north of present day Delhi whose capital was Hastina-pura (elephant city). The two clans were said to have descended from Puru, a great ancestor of one branch of the Lunar race.

The Gita-Govinda

This love poem is a favorite among devotees of Krishna. Written about the XII or XIII Century A.D. by Jaya-deva, it narrates the loves of Krishna and Radha. Krishna, one of the most popular heroes of later Indian mythology, is said to be the eighth Avatara or incarnation of Vishnu. (5)

The Rasika Priya

The Rasika Priya, written in 1591 A.D., is a long detailed treatise in rhetoric and literary analysis which classifies heroes and heroines of Indian lore according to their circumstances, character, age, etc. This work is by Kesava Das whose activity more than covered the reign of the Muslim emperor, Akbar (1556-1605).

The Bhagavad-Gita

'The song of the Divine One' (The Bhagavad-Gita) is an episode in the Mahabharata. Krishna is the chief speaker, and explains to Arjuna his philosophical doctrines. Krishna in this work is held to be the supreme being, whereas he is otherwise considered a manifestation of Vishnu.

Kanthas

The meaning of the word Kantha is 'rag.' Worn-out pieces of white cotton, usually from a Sari, are salvaged and pieced together. Threads drawn from the colored borders of these Saris are used to embroider a design. The Kantha, made by the women of Bengal, "is a work of thrift, it is also an offering of love."⁽⁶⁾ Kanthas were designed to be worn as wraps in winter or for protecting books, mirrors, combs, and other valuables. They were used as pillow covers or folded as wallets. If very large, they were used as bed-spreads for honored guests.

It is interesting here to note that the larger Kanthas took as long as three generations to complete. Like the ritual free-hand drawings made in liquid rice paste, the embroidered Kantha is "an art exclusively of women."⁽⁷⁾

Symbolism plays an important part in the design of the Kantha. The lotus, symbol of the universe and of creation, the "life-tree," the leaf of the Bodhi tree, the peacock, the tortoise, the fish, and the elephant are but a few of the many symbols held sacred in India.

-- William E. Ward

References

- (1) MARG, Bombay 1952, Vol. V, No. 1.
- (2) W. G. Archer in his most recent book, Indian Painting in the Punjab Hills, lists the "Punjab Hill" states on page 85.
- (3) Archer, W.G., Indian Painting in the Punjab Hills, London 1952, p. 17.
- (4) Anjar, V. V. S., Kamba Ramayanam--A Study, Madras 1950, p. 5.
- (5) Dowson, John, A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, London 1928, p. 160.
- (6) Kramrisch, Stella, "Kanthas of Bengal," MARG, Vol. 3, No. 2, Bombay.
- (7) Ibid.

PAINTINGS

Western Indian and Rajasthani Schools *Region*

- 878912 1) ILLUSTRATION FROM THE RASIKA PRIYA
Malwa School, ca. 1620
(Plate II)
- 87889-90 2) ILLUSTRATION FROM THE RASIKA PRIYA
Malwa School, ca. 1620
- 87883-4 3) ILLUSTRATION FROM THE RASIKA PRIYA
Malwa School, ca. 1620
- 87773-4 4) KRISHNA RAISING MOUNT GOVARDHANA
(A mountain which Krishna induced the
cowherds and cowherdesses to worship
instead of Indra)
Jodhpur School, 2nd half XVII Century
- 87775-6 5) MARU RAGA
(The Raga is a musical mode or melody
personified. Raginis are their consorts)
Jodhpur School, last quarter XVIII Century
- 6) RAGINI BHAIKAVI
('The terrible' name of Devi, wife of
Shiva)
Bundi School, XVIII Century
- 7) ARDDHANARISHVARA AND GANESHA, LION AND BULL
(A form in which Shiva is half-male and
half-female, the male and female ener-
gies combined. Ganesha is the elephant-
headed son of Shiva and Parvati)
Bundi School, ca. 1700
- 87835-6 8) DURGA MAHISHASURA MARDINI.
(Durga, the terrible form of the wife of
Shiva, here is 'Destroyer of Mahisha,'
an Asura in the form of a buffalo)
Bundi School, mid-XVIII Century

Region
Western Indian and Rajasthani Schools (cont.)

- 9) SHIVA AND PARVATI: THE BURNING OF THE DEMON'S HEAD
Bundi School, mid-XVIII Century
- 10) KRISHNA DISGUISED AS A WOMAN APPROACHES RADHA
Bundi School, mid-XVIII Century
- 11) SHIVA, PARVATI, GANESHA AND KARTTIKEYA
(Ganesha, 'god of wisdom,' and Karttikeya, 'god of war,' are sons of Shiva and Parvati)
Jaipur School, ca. 1800 *coll. Geo Buckford*
- 12) RASALILA (Dance of Love)
(Krishna multiplies himself and dances with each of the Gopis, thus each thinks he loves her most)
Jaipur School, later part XVIII Century
- 87893-13) RAGINI VIBHASA
Jaipur School, mid-XVIII Century
(Plate IV)
- 87824-30 14) RAGA DIPAK
Jaipur School, 2nd half XVIII Century
- 15) DIWAN BHIM SINGH
Kotah School, later part XVIII Century

Punjab Hill Schools *Region*

- 16) LADIES PLAYING DRUM AND CYMBALS
Basohli School, ca. 1695
(Plate III)
- 17) VISHVAMITRA
(A sage in Hindu mythology who, born a Kshatriya, became a Brahmin by performing austerities)
Basohli School, ca. 1690

- 18) HARIHARA
87821-2 (The names Vishnu and Shiva combined,
representing the union of the two
deities in one)
Basohli School, ca. 1690
- ~~XX~~ not wanted
19) THE LEGEND OF THE QUICKSILVER
Guler School, ca. 1755
- 87827-8 20) RAMACHANDRA MEETS THE KING OF NISHAD
Guler School, ca. 1755
- 87831-2 21) THE RETURN OF SUCELA
Guler School, mid-XVIII Century
- 22) SHIVA AND HIS HOLY FAMILY IN THE CAVE
(His wife Parvati and his sons
Ganesha and Karttikeya)
Guler School, ca. 1755
- 87857-8 23) ILLUSTRATION FOR BHAGAVADGITA
Guler School, ca. 1750
- 87841-2 24) ILLUSTRATION FOR BHAGAVADGITA
Guler School, ca. 1750
- 87813-7 25) SHIVA INTOXICATED
Punch School?, ca. 1765
- 26) MAHESVARA (A name for Shiva)
West Punjab Hill School, late XVIII Century
- 27) KRISHNA RAISING MOUNT GOvardhana
Jammu School, ca. 1760
- 87843-44 28) BRAHMA AND THE COWS
Jammu School?, end XVIII Century

Region
Punjab Hill Schools (cont.)

— 29) GOPINIS

(The milkmaids with whom Krishna sports)
Jammu School?, end XVIII Century

See also Bickford

— 30) THE DEATH OF BALI

(Bali took away the wife of his brother Sugriva who requested Rama's aid in getting her back. Rama shot an arrow from behind a bush killing Bali. Bali was blessed with a boon that none would kill him face to face)

Kangra School, ca. 1800

— 31) EVOCATION

Kangra School, 1795

— 32) THE LADY AND THE PEACOCK

Kangra School, 1800

— 33) VISHNU AND LAKSHMI ON GARUDA.

8781/2 (Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu and the goddess of fortune, rides with her husband on the Garuda, a mythical bird, half-man and half-bird)

Kangra School, ca. 1780

— 34) KRISHNA SPURNED

Kangra School, ca. 1805

— 35) KRISHNA AND RADHA

Kangra School, ca. 1805

8780/1 36) SHIVA AND HIS HOLY FAMILY DESCENDING FROM KAILASA

Kangra School, ca. 1800

37) SCENE FROM RAMAYANA

Kangra School, ca. 1810-1820

- V No
- 87805-6 38) SCENE FROM RAMAYANA
Kangra School, ca. 1810-1820
- 87799-800 39) SCENE FROM RAMAYANA
Kangra School, ca. 1810-1820
- 87807-8 40) SCENE FROM RAMAYANA
Kangra School, ca. 1810-1820
- 87809-10 41) SHIVA REVEALS HIS TRUE FORM TO UMA
Kangra School, ca. 1770
- 87803-4 42) SHIVA AND HIS HOLY FAMILY DESCEND FROM
KAILASA
Kangra School, ca. 1810 *cat. by Bickford*
- 43) AFTER THE BATH
Nurpur School?, ca. 1800-1810
- 44) HISTORICAL SCENE
Sikh School, ca. 1800-1810
- 45) HISTORICAL SCENE
Sikh School, ca. 1800
- 46) BAGALAMUKHI-YANTRA
West Himalaya School, XVIII Century

Bengal Schools regn

- 87819-20 47) SARASVATI, Consort of Brahma
(River goddess, goddess of Speech and
Learning)
Kalighat, Bengal School, ca. 1860
- B/W - 48) KALIGHAT BRUSH DRAWING
Calcutta School, ca. 1875
(Plate I)

Bengal Schools (cont.)

- B/W - 49) KALIGHAT BRUSH DRAWING
Calcutta School, ca. 1875
- 50) WOMAN AND CHILD (1936)
by Jamini Roy, Bengal School
- 51) SANTHAL GIRL (1925)
by Jamini Roy, Bengal School
- 52) HEAD OF A GIRL (1945)
by Jamini Roy, Bengal School
- 53) THE STAG (1920)
by Jamini Roy, Bengal School

FOLK ART

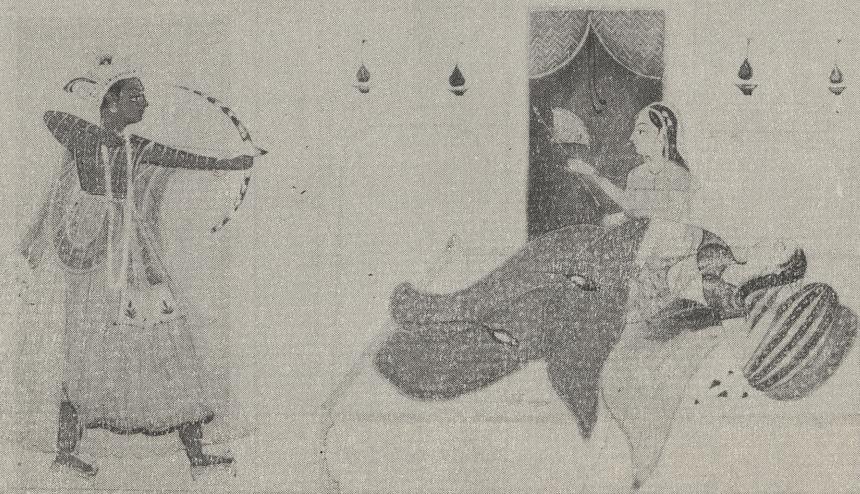
- 87797-8 54) KRISHNA PAT FROM MIDNADUR
Bengal painted scroll, XIX Century *Re* *Detailed
sections with minor
variations*
- 55) DURGA AND KALI
(Goddess Kali 'the black,' the
fierce consort of Shiva)
Bengal painted Scroll, XIX Century
- 56) RAMAYANA PANEL
Bengal painted scroll, XIX Century
- 57) RAMAYANA PANEL: EPISODE OF THE
GOLDEN DEER
Bengal painted scroll, XIX Century
- 58) JAGANATH 'Lord of the world'
(A form of Krishna worshipped in
Bengal and other parts of India.
Puri in Orissa is the center of his
worship)
Bengal painted scroll, XIX Century

राजा रामप्रसाद कृष्ण



III. LADIES PLAYING DRUM AND CYMBALS
Basohli School, ca. 1695

रागना विभासा ॥२८॥ द्वोपद्ममेघमलारकामगतिकिनीः मेघविनासअंकनरै
 लीकुः पौहेपथनुप्रबांनकरलाप्तेः रत्निसंग्रामविचारतिहृस्यैः वहनेहठदहथा
 लगावैः बहनमारपीयपिमबउपावैः होउबलवंतरदोउजुद्कारैः रहसमानको
 उनहाहरा: मुखरउपएके उनिहरा: नबलत्रीष्टपीयजोबन बारा: "मुणियतकथा
 जुकामकीः शितिविनोदपीयसंगः सरसनैनकरिनिरघाएः सरसेसरसाहरंगः ॥२८॥



IV. RAGINI VIBHASA
Jaipur School, mid-XVIII Century

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FOLK ART (cont.)

- 59) SAKTI PAT, FROM BIRBHUM
(A Sakti is the wife or female energy
of a deity, especially of Shiva)
Bengal painted scroll, XIX Century
- 87771-2 60) SAKTI PAT, FROM BIRBHUM
Bengal painted scroll, XIX Century *detail*
- 61) SAKTI PAT, FROM BIRBHUM
Bengal painted scroll, XIX Century
- 62) KAMALAKAMINI, FROM BIRBHUM
Bengal painted scroll, XIX Century

KANTHAS FROM EAST BENGAL

- 63) Square Kantha, with Krishna scenes,
butterfly in center
XIX Century
- X 64) Square Kantha
XIX Century
- 65) Square Kantha, multicolored, in broad
border
XIX Century
- 66) Large square Kantha inscribed with
Navaganjara
XIX Century
- 67) Square Kantha (Muslim)
XIX Century
- 68) Square Kantha with Mandala design
XIX Century
- 69) Square Kantha inscribed with Durga
XIX Century

Kanthas from East Bengal (cont.)

- 70) Rectangle Kantha with soldiers
XIX Century
- 71) Small square Kantha with Krishna . *Detail*
XIX Century
- 72) Small rectangle Kantha with Life tree
and chariot
XIX Century
- 73) Small rectangle Kantha with ritual dance
(multicolored)
XIX Century

- 74) Large Kantha with lotuses and Indra
XIX Century

~~Item 75~~ Large Kantha, multicolored with circus scenes
XIX Century *Have detail + dup.*

- ~~76)~~ Large Kantha with two Life trees *Detail*
XIX Century

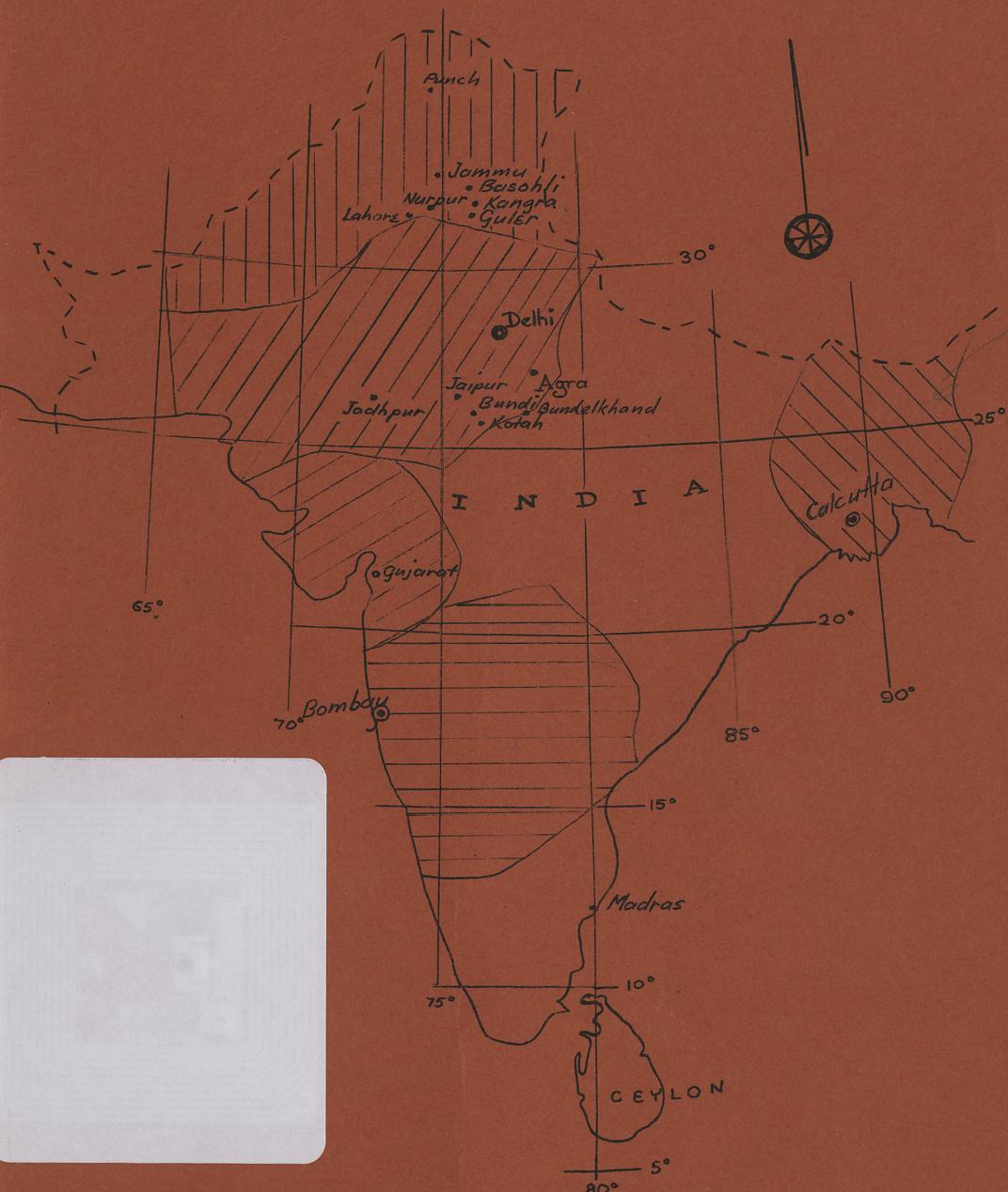
- 77) Large Kantha with "eyes" and decorative panels
XIX Century

- ~~78)~~ Large Kantha, mythological, etc. Scenes
XIX Century *Detail*

- 79) Large Kantha with weavers pattern
XIX Century

80), 81), 82), 83), 84), 85), 86), 87), and 88)

Metal Figures
Bengal and northern India
XIX Century



||||||| Punjab Hill Schools

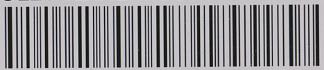
||||| Rajasthani Schools

||| Gujarat

— Deccani Schools

\\\\\\\\ Bengal Schools

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